

The Window of Opportunity for a Lung Transplant

- ✓ It can be difficult to know when to consider getting a lung transplant.
- ✓ The goal of this document is to provide information that will help you be more informed when you talk with your healthcare team. Your team will work with you to decide when to get an evaluation.
- ✓ The timing of referral for a transplant evaluation is important. You don't want to be evaluated too soon. You also don't want to wait too long. Err on the side of an early visit instead of a late one.
- ✓ There is a window of opportunity—when you are sick enough to need a transplant and healthy enough to go through the surgery.

It May be Time for an Evaluation When...

- ✓ Your healthcare providers are likely to consider referring you for a lung transplant evaluation if:
 - ☐ Your FEV1 (a measure of lung function) is near or below 20% of predicted
 - ☐ Your symptoms are worsening even though you are already making the most of your available treatment options such as medications, supplemental oxygen, and pulmonary rehabilitation
 - ☐ You are having frequent acute exacerbations
 - ☐ You have moderate or severe pulmonary hypertension

Steps You Can Take Before Evaluation

- ✓ Your first step is to get a referral to a lung transplant center from your healthcare providers.
- ✓ Your healthcare team can help you identify barriers to transplantation that you can begin to work on prior to evaluation at a lung transplant center. Potential barriers that you may address include:
 - ☐ Missed vaccinations
 - ☐ Missed bone density scans to look for osteoporosis
 - ☐ Missed routine cancer screenings like a colonoscopy
 - ☐ Use of medications such as opioids or benzodiazepines that you must stop prior to transplant
 - ☐ Body mass index (BMI) that is too high or too low
 - ☐ Deconditioning that can be improved through pulmonary rehabilitation
 - ☐ Dental problems that can be addressed by working with your dentist
- ✓ When you meet with the transplant team, it is important to bring family or friends to every appointment. It is also important to be on time and organized. Social support and organizational skills can influence whether you are eligible for a transplant.

CAS and Eligibility for a Lung Transplant

- ✓ A lung Composite Allocation Score (CAS) is calculated as part of the lung transplant evaluation.
 - ☐ An important element of CAS is type of lung disease. Diseases with more rapid progression (such as idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis) get a higher priority score than diseases with slower progression (such as emphysema or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).
 - ☐ In addition to type of lung disease, CAS is based on need for supplemental oxygen, 6-minute walk distance, and other health characteristics that affect your risk of death without a transplant.
- ✓ Eligibility for a lung transplant is based on CAS, other aspects of overall health, and how much social support you have.
- ✓ You may not be eligible for a transplant if you have other serious health problems like active cancer, severe heart disease, or uncontrolled infections.
- ✓ In Alpha-1, liver disease may also affect eligibility for a lung transplant. Combined transplants of lung and liver are sometimes performed when both organs have advanced disease.
- ✓ Among Alphas who are eligible for a lung transplant, timing of transplant can depend on factors such as height and blood type.

Additional Resources

- ✓ Chapter 9 of AlphaNet's Big Fat Reference Guide (BFRG) focuses on lung transplants. Anyone can access [AlphaNet's BFRG](#). AlphaNet Subscribers can access the BFRG through their [Subscriber Portal](#).
- ✓ AlphaNet has created several 1-page documents that focus on lung health, which are available [here](#).